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For more information

Official documents about the South Plant site can be viewed at the Waukegan Public Library, 128 N. County St. Ask for location of EPA's information repository at the reference desk.

Site documents can also be read at the EPA Region 5 Records Center, 7th floor, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

On the Web

www.epa.gov/region5/sites/people/gas

Sampling Begins as Part of Cleanup Investigation

North Shore Gas South Plant Site

Waukegan, Illinois

July 2009

Contractors for North Shore Gas are investigating a 2-acre former manufactured gas plant site, once known as "South Plant," near the entrance to the Waukegan Port District. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is overseeing the investigation.

In October 2008 Integrys Energy Group, the parent company of North Shore Gas, entered into an agreement with EPA to investigate and study 13 former manufactured gas plant locations in northern Illinois as part of the Agency's Superfund Alternative Sites program. South Plant is one of those sites.

Site description and history

The South Plant site is located in an industrial and commercial area along both sides of Pershing Road, a city street near Waukegan's lakefront. The northern boundary of the former manufactured gas plant facility is Waukegan's Metra train station parking lot and its western boundary is the Union Pacific Railroad yard. The southern and eastern boundary is the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway line. Immediately east of the EJ&E railroad are properties owned by the Waukegan Port District and Akzo Nobel, a manufacturing company. The former South Plant property is owned by North Shore Gas, except for Pershing Road, which runs through the middle of the site and is owned and maintained by the city of Waukegan. The site of the former manufactured gas plant is currently vacant with some sparse vegetation and the remnants of former buildings covering the area.

The South Plant facility was constructed in 1897 by the Waukegan Pipeline Service Co. and was used to manufacture gas from coal from 1898 to 1946, except for the years 1927 to 1935.

The facility was purchased by North Shore Gas in 1900. In 1951 North Shore Gas closed the manufactured gas plant and dismantled buildings.

Site investigations

From 1991 to 2005 several environmental surveys were completed on the site and the surrounding properties. Most of these studies and cleanup activities were conducted as part of Illinois EPA's voluntary site remediation program.

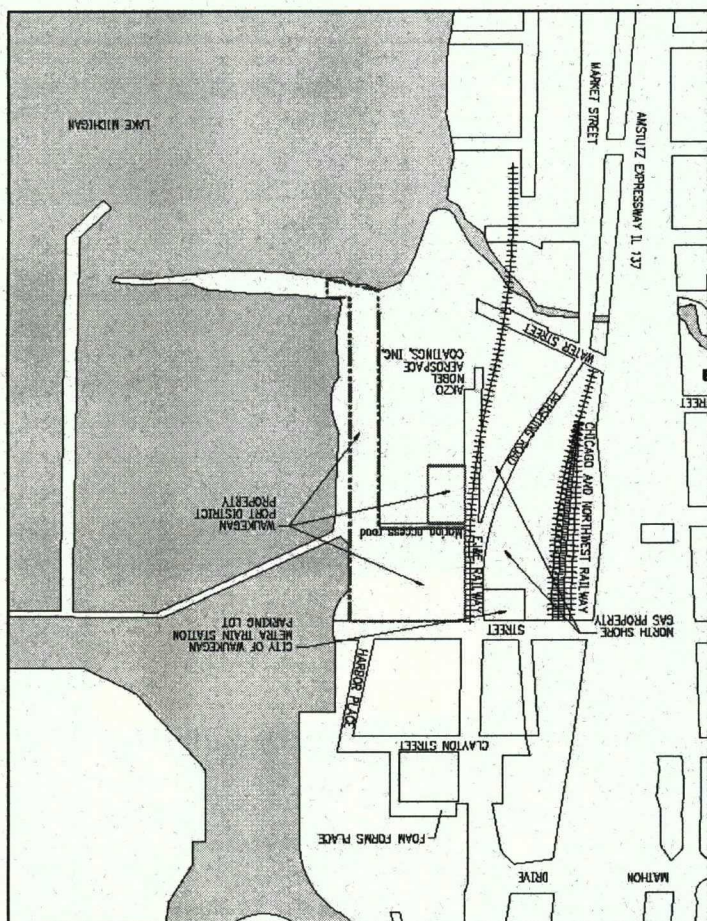
Investigations found that soil on the site contained coal tar and petroleum-like contamination including polyaromatic hydrocarbons or PAHs, and other chemicals. Samples of ground water (underground supplies of fresh water) collected on the South Plant site and on nearby properties from 2001 to 2005 contained volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-VOCs, and metals. Also, a sheen of visible hydrocarbons was observed in the ground water both at the site and on the Port District and Akzo Nobel properties.

Cleanup activities

Soil cleanup was conducted at the South Plant site in 2003-2004. This included excavation and removal of contaminated soil located above the

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This year under EPA's supervision, North Shore Gas is sampling soil and ground water at the site and on nearby properties, as well as lake and river sediment (mud). The results will be studied to discover the extent of any remaining contamination and how to address it. The study will also evaluate what risks there might be to people and the environment. This investigation is expected to be completed next year. At that time EPA will present the results to the public in a fact sheet and at a public meeting.

Next steps

water table. More than 19,000 tons of contaminated soil was removed from the site and backfilled with clean earth. This cleanup focused on soil containing the greatest degree of contamination. It did not deal with polluted soil located beneath the water table and did not remove all contaminated soil above the water table. Recovery of tar in the ground water is currently ongoing, both at the site and on the Port District property.